

**South Dakota National Guard**  
**Public Affairs Office**  
2823 West Main St.  
Rapid City, S.D. 57702

Phone 605-737-6721  
E-mail [PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil](mailto:PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## South Dakota Airmen return to Southwest Asia

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – The South Dakota Air National Guard is once again fully engaged in support of the United States Air Force's Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) and Expeditionary Combat Support (ECS) rotation plans.

Currently, more than 100 Airmen of the state's 114th Fighter Wing are deployed to seven countries throughout Europe, Western Asia and Central America in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Ongoing Combat Air Force operations in Southwest Asia also include South Dakota F-16 Fighting Falcons that deployed earlier this summer in support of the multi-state Air National Guard AEF deployment.

The number of personnel deployed to Southwest Asia will continue to increase in the next week as additional Airmen depart Joe Foss Field. These Airmen will complete advance preparations for a larger deployment that will follow later in July. By the end of this month, more than 350 officers and enlisted members will be deployed. They are expected to return in the early fall of 2008.

Over two-thirds of the South Dakota Air National Guard's 1,012 members have actively supported the Global War on Terrorism, since the Sept. 11 attacks on America, either at home or abroad in 15 countries.

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**MEDIA NOTE:** The Airmen deploying with the advanced party for this AEF rotation will depart Joe Foss Field on Monday, July 14, 2008. Media interested in covering this story should arrive at the South Dakota Air National Guard's main gate (near corner of Algonquin Street and F Avenue) at 7:30 a.m. Please do not publicly announce the date and time of this departure in advance.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**, please contact Lt. Col. Reid Christopherson at (605) 988-5644, cell (605) 310-9476, E-mail [reid.christopherson@sdsiou.ang.af.mil](mailto:reid.christopherson@sdsiou.ang.af.mil), or Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, cell (605) 431-8753.